

Information Needs and Guidelines for Timber Harvest Plans (THPs) for
US Fish and Wildlife Service Technical Assistance Analysis
San Francisco Garter Snake (SFGS)

I. Definitions:

- A. Non-work season: October 1- May 15
- B. Wetlands: All ponds or water saturated areas with a minimum of 12 inches of standing water as measured between May 15 and June 15 of the year the THP is scheduled to occur.
- C. Watercourse: Class I or Class II streams or waterways.
- D. Species Range: San Mateo County

II. Package Components to include for THPs within the Species Range:

- A. All documentation submitted for Technical Assistance must be legible
- B. Letter requesting Technical Assistance must provide general information relevant to the THP such as:
 - i. THP number
 - ii. Township-Range-Section location data. Include PLSS description, maps of units, haul roads and landings
 - iii. Other important information that might influence take determination:
 - a. Operating schedule
 - b. Watershed where the THP is proposed
 - c. Types of timber operations and how harvested timber will be removed from the site
 - d. Whether new roads will be created for access to or within the site; number of roads; length of roads; road landings; skid trail maintenance and construction; pile burning; herbicide treatment; and dust abatement
 - e. Description of watercourse and wetland crossings necessary to access the site
 - f. Total acres, including access roads and logging sites that would be affected by logging activities
- C. Hard copy map and aerial photo coverage (or equivalent imagery) showing the location of THP units in relation to watercourses and wetlands (as defined above) within a 5 mile radius from these units
- D. Map of the most recent known locations of SFGS observations (from CDFG California Natural Diversity Database and other information) within 5 miles of THP unit boundaries. Map should include the following:
 - 1. Version date, which must correspond to the present rendition of the CDFG database

2. If known observations differ from CDFG database, submit documentation supporting the location of these observations.
3. Occurrences should be shown as polygons, not points
4. The approximate route of access routes if timber will be removed by ground transportation (roads and skid trails).

III. If requesting a determination of unoccupied status for a THP the following are also required:

- i. Current condition of habitat
- ii. Discussion of past and approved timber operations and natural events such as fire that has or will alter the condition of the habitat.

* The February 1, 2008 document was modified, resulting in this March 25, 2008 version, in response to CALFIRES comments on clarity and consistency in terminology.

San Francisco Garter Snake Take Avoidance Scenarios

March 25, 2008ⁱ

(Replaces 2/1/08 version)

The following describes how the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determines whether take is likely to occur for San Francisco garter snakes. While we believe this is the most effective manner in avoiding take, it is likely not the only manner in which take can be avoided. These are programmatic approaches to take avoidance. These programmatic scenarios do not take into consideration site-specific conditions that can be used to design alternative methods for avoiding take. Using site-specific information and evaluation, CALFIRE may design alternative take avoidance methods on a case-by-case basis. The scenarios below are recommended tools to avoid take, but are not required approaches imposed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

I. Scenario I: If the THP occurs within the Species Range of the San Francisco garter snake, species presence must be assumed. Implementation of the flowing measure would result in take avoidance:

There are no Class I or II Watercourses within 300 feet or Wetlands within 0.5 mile of THP boundary.

II. Scenario II: If the THP occurs within the Species Range of the San Francisco garter snake, species presence must be assumed. Implementation of the following measures would result in take avoidance:

- i. There are Class I or II Watercourses within 300 feet or Wetlands within 0.5 mile of THP boundary.
- ii. Watercourses may only be crossed to access the site using pre-existing crossing, e.g. bridges or culverts. (no upgrades, replacement, or installation of new crossing)
- iii. Wetlands will not be crossed to access or remove timber from the THP site, except by using preexisting roads, crossings, and skid trails.
- iv. All components of the THP (including road construction, maintenance and rehabilitation as well as timber harvest activities such as falling, lopping, erosion control, tree planting, and monitoring activities) will occur outside of the Non-work season (Oct 1- May 15).
- v. No new access roads or skid trails will be created within 300 feet of Class I or II Watercourses or 0.5 miles of Wetlands.
- vi. Class III Watercourses will only be crossed when dry.
- vii. Pile burning will occur a minimum of 300 feet from a Class I or II Watercourse or 0.5 miles from Wetlands.
- viii. Herbicide will only be applied directly to stumps with a hand sprayer and will be limited to locations within the harvest area and along access roads. Spraying will be performed according to the appropriate Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guidelines.

- ix. No water shall be drawn/drafted from Wetlands or Class I or II Watercourses within the Species Range for non-emergency purposes. An emergency is considered to be for wildfire suppression purposes.
- x. Access and site road density will not exceed 2.5 miles per square mile.

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